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THE JAPANESE IN AMERICA

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The first Japanese who ever came to America, as far as is known, was Manjiro Nakahama, a fourteen year old lad, who was picked up by the captain of an American fishing vessel, in 1841, twelve years before the coming of Commodore Perry to Japan. Nakahama with four companions had sailed out into the ocean on a fishing expedition; their boat had been wrecked by a storm, and they were finally washed ashore on a desert island in the northern Pacific. Three months of dire privation were passed on the island before the little party was rescued by the American vessel. The other Japanese were left in Hawaii, while Nakahama, who became a favorite of the captain, was brought to the United States, and placed in school. When Commodore Perry came to Japan, Nakahama acted as interpreter in the negotiations carried on between the American envoy and the Japanese government, represented by the feudal officials.

Historically speaking, the fact that the first Japanese who came to America was a student is a mere accident of circumstance; but when one reflects upon the past and present attitude of the Japanese, both at home and in America, toward this country, this incident has a deep significance in that the Japanese are always desirous of coming to America as students—to learn something, and to find something that seems worth the learning. The Japanese who are eager to come to America are in the main students; the Japanese who are in America, whatever work they may be doing here, are students at heart. They are conscious of their good fortune in being in touch with Western civilization, and are determined to understand it and to

introduce it into their own country. It was so in the past, and it is so now.

When Commodore Perry first came to Japan, most Japanese believed that all foreigners were barbarians, and they believed it simply because they did not comprehend what Western civilization was. But some of the intelligent class of Japanese did recognize that the foreigners with their awe-inspiring warships,—“blackships” as they were called by the Japanese at the time—had something which the Japanese did not possess. Young men, eager to learn, eager to do some service for their country, wanted to go to Occidental countries, though their going was prohibited by the government of the time under penalty of death. Some of these ambitious young men failed, but some succeeded in evading the strict surveillance of the government, and as stowaways reached foreign shores. The late Prince Ito, the greatest statesman of modern Japan, who went to England during the tumultuous times of the opening of Japan to foreign countries, was one. The late Jo Niisima, founder of the Doshisha Christian College, who worked his passage to America on a tramp steamer, and got a Christian education here, was another. Later on, when Western learning was encouraged in Japan, many bright young men found their way to American colleges, and these men are today among the foremost leaders of the country. The late Marquis Komura, who represented Japan at the Portsmouth Peace Conference concluding the Russo-Japanese War, was a graduate of Harvard; Viscount Chinda, the new ambassador to the United States, is also a graduate of an American university. Dr. Hatoyama who died last month, and who was a prominent political leader, was a graduate of Yale. Princess Oyama, wife of the commander of the Japanese forces in the Russian War, is a Vassar graduate. The wife of Viscount Uchida, recently Ambassador to America, is a graduate of Bryn Mawr. President Yamakawa of the newly organized Imperial University of Kyushu studied at Yale. Leaders in religious and educational circles who have been educated in America are literally innumerable. These young men and women who

were educated in America a generation ago or later came to be the guiding spirits of modern Japan. They represented ability, culture, enlightenment, and all that higher education means in the making of a man or woman. They were an object lesson of Western civilization. They told the young men of Japan of the land of liberty and justice, the land of Washington and Lincoln, the land of Longfellow, Irving, Hawthorne and Mark Twain. These names have thrilled all Japanese who desire to come to America, and thrilled them because they are students. New Haven and Cambridge are names even more familiar to the Japanese than New York and Chicago. Some of these young men may have means. When they have, they come to America as regular college students. Some may not be so fortunate; these work here for their education.

Herein lies the decided difference between the Japanese and European immigrants. The European immigrants are in the main attracted here by the stories of huge fortunes made and to be made in America. The jingle of the dollar is in their ears all the way across the Atlantic. The Japanese do not know much about American millionaires. Their dreams are not of money but of books and colleges. There are Japanese farmers in the West and Japanese domestic servants in the East. One complaint we always hear about these Japanese servants is that they demand time to attend night schools or similar institutions. We also hear of Japanese butlers being discovered in kitchen corners, writing a poem or an essay. The American employer wonders why these Japanese cannot devote their attention to their work or other profitable business, instead of reading books and talking of colleges. Their wonder is quite natural, in view of the fact that the European immigrant throws himself heart and soul into the work that his employer may give him—if only it pays. It requires a long time for the Japanese young men to lose their ambition to get an American education, if they ever lose it.

A few years ago, when the Japanese government prohibited, at the request of the American authorities, the

coming of the Japanese laborers to America, a vital blow was dealt to the young men who were not rich enough to come to America as regular college students, but who still wanted to come, not really to work, but to learn. The flow of immigration from Japan to America has not only been stopped, but reversed. The excess of the Japanese departures from the United States over arrivals has been about 2,500 a year since 1908. The forced diminution of the Japanese population in the West had a disastrous effect on Japanese mercantile houses catering to their needs. Not a few banks and stores were forced to close, and those left are trying to remodel their business so as to cater to the general public, instead of to Japanese customers only. These attempts happily have in most cases been successful.

The charge that the Japanese are an undesirable element in the population of America is not sustained by fact. As already stated, the Japanese coming to America are mostly aspiring students and have had the benefit of a good education at home. Often we see graduates of the Japanese colleges working as ordinary farm-hands in the West and as butlers in the East. They have the peculiar characteristics that education alone can impart to a man. They have a sense of honor, of duty and of pride. They may have weaknesses, too, but I do not hesitate to assert upon their behalf, that when they become citizens of America they will be worthy citizens. The fact that the Japanese in San Francisco, though small in number, readily subscribed the sum of \$50,000 to the fund of the coming Panama-Pacific Exposition certainly does not show that they are indifferent to what is going on around them.

A decided characteristic of the Japanese in this country is their remarkable assimilation of American manners and customs. There is in no Occidental city a Japantown as there is a Chinatown. Though there are two thousand Japanese in New York, they are scattered all over the city, and so thoroughly merged in the population that they never form an element apart. The allegation that the Japanese are unassimilable is a totally mistaken one. The

Japanese in California last summer begged that some representative Japanese from home might visit them and study their conditions. Dr. Nitobe, the first exchange professor between the United States and Japan, and Representative Saburo Shimada, who had taken up the mission of visiting California, both came, expecting to hear many and various complaints from the Japanese in the Western States in view of the great number of anti-Japanese problems originating there. The surprise of the visitors was all the greater when they discovered for instance that the Japanese in California had really invited them that they might observe the prosperous condition in which they were living. They were evidently liked and respected by their American neighbors; were perfectly satisfied with the treatment they received from the American authorities. They declared that the so-called anti-Japanese feeling was a political fiction only, and had nothing to do with the actualities of life. They were materially prosperous, and with prosperity, there has come a universal desire to marry. To accomplish this, they have evolved a plan of finding wives through the exchange of photographs with young women at home, the result being that each steamer arriving in San Francisco brings a bevy of blushing brides from the country of the cherry and chrysanthemum. So these Asiatics settle on America's soil, aspiring to bring up a generation of worthy citizens of this great republic.

In California the Japanese are mostly engaged in agriculture. The land cultivated by them amounts to about 200,000 acres, yielding \$6,000,000 worth of various products each year. Professor Takahashi of Tokyo University not long ago upon a visit to Fresno, California, said: "Twelve years ago there were only four Japanese graves in Fresno. Now there are 1,200. During these years, 10,000 Japanese came to Fresno to pick grapes, the Caucasian laborer being unable to do the work in a squatting position as the Japanese do it. The temperature at the grape-gathering season is about 140° Fahrenheit, and the heat of the gravel scorches the pickers' feet even through the specially-made leather shoe soles about an inch thick.

Maddened with thirst, they eat the grapes, drink polluted water, and die of typhoid fever, the disease which is responsible for the death of one in every eight of them. These men fought a twelve years' war in the California vineyards, and fell on the field at a rate such as is seldom seen on even the most destructive of battlefields. So was the fruit industry in California brought to the condition in which it is today; and the exclusion of Japanese labor will be impossible without revolutionizing the conditions of the growing of fruits and their marketing, a result neither possible nor desirable as pointed out in an official report of the Labor Commissioner of California.

"The California fruit growers have, in the absence of the Japanese, imported Hindoo laborers, and found them very unsatisfactory. The fact that the Japanese are necessary for the development of America, is undeniable, and any attempt to conceal or misrepresent this fact, is unjust, unwarranted, unmoral and unfriendly."

The Commissioner of the Labor Bureau of California after an exhaustive investigation into Japanese labor reported that this labor or its equivalent was essential to the development and carrying on of some specialized agricultural industries, such, for example, as fruits and sugar beets. It is now admitted that the anti-Japanese agitation in California was all due to the machinations of local political organs. Where such influence is not exercised, for instance at Seattle, the utmost cordiality exists between the Japanese and the Americans in whatever circumstances they may meet.

You who live in the United States do not know the magic of the word America as the Japanese young men do. There are even at the present moment thousands of Japanese longing for the chance to cross the Pacific, but because they must work in America to live, they are barred from seeing the land of their hopes and aspirations. If they did come, you may be sure that they would contribute their full share as their forerunners have done, to the progress of that wonderful civilization that is American.

Is not the Japanese laboring class doing its work well in

America? And on the intellectual side, also, are not the Japanese doing creditable work, particularly when the smallness of their number here is considered?

About the year 1886 the newspapers in Japan made it a point to urge the desirability of Japanese students proceeding to America, and in consequence, San Francisco soon came to harbor many of them. The first thing they did upon their arrival was to publish a weekly magazine, styled *New Japan*, printing it by mimeograph. It advocated extreme radicalism, a radicalism that was characterized more by courage than by discretion. Its distribution in Japan was frequently prohibited, and it had to change its name from time to time, until it was compelled finally to suspend publication about 1892. At present there are three newspapers published in San Francisco. They are the *New World*, established fifteen years ago, the *Nichi-bei* (Japan and America), established ten years ago, and the *San Francisco News*, established ten years ago. They are all published in Japanese. In fact there are one or more Japanese newspapers in every town where live a sufficient number of Japanese. Such is the case with Los Angeles, Sacramento, Seattle, Portland, Salt Lake, Denver, and New York. In New York, there are two Japanese weekly newspapers, the *Japanese American Commercial Weekly* and the *New York Shimpō*; and the Oriental Information Agency is publishing in English a monthly, called *The Oriental Review*, which seeks to promote a better understanding of Oriental affairs by the American public.

There are also many individuals working in the line of intellectual advancement in America. Kakuzo Okakura, Curator of the Japanese Department of the Boston Museum, has brought the collection of Japanese art objects there to a plane rarely seen even in Japan itself. Dr. Iyenaga, professorial lecturer of the Chicago University, Dr. Asakawa, assistant professor of Yale University, Mr. Kinnosuke Adachi and Mr. Masuji Miyagawa, contributors to magazines and newspapers, are all making valuable contributions to Western knowledge of the East in speech or writing. There are also Japanese medical authorities work-

ing independently or with various American institutions, whose discoveries in medicine have already won world-wide recognition.

It is often asserted that the Japanese are indifferent to religion. I do not know that any of the Western nations are so particularly interested in religion that they can claim to be more religious than the Japanese. If there are any people who have more interest in religion than others, they are those whose most distinctive character is religious. Mohamedans, Mormons, and believers in a few other such religions may be such. The Japanese are not so fanatical. They are Buddhists and Shintoists at the same time; they believe in the precepts of Confucius, and some of them are Christians. The Honganji, which is the Buddhist Vatican in Japan, has no less than fifteen temples in America, including one in Vancouver. These temples may be found in San Francisco, Sacramento, Oakland, Stockton, San José, Fresno, Los Angeles, Portland, Seattle, and other places on the Pacific coast. The Buddhist Japanese in America are also organized into various associations which, like the Y. M. C. A., have their own library, music corps, and recreation departments. They are publishing Buddhist magazines, such as *American Buddhism*, *Teaching of Buddha*, *Los Angeles Buddhism*, and others, either in Japanese or English. There are also Japanese Christian churches of different denominations both on the Pacific coast and in the Eastern States, though most Japanese Christians are inclined to attend American churches of their own denomination.

There are a number of Japanese in America like Kanae Nagasawa of Sonoma County and Kinji Ushijima of San Francisco whose work in industrial or agricultural lines has already been crowned with success. Both of these men came to America as students, and seeing the vast opportunities that America offered to any man of industrial ability, plunged into business earnestly. Nagasawa was a student in England at the time Japan was passing through the stirring period of the restoration of the imperial régime. Money ceased to come from home, and Nagasawa was

brought to America by Townsend Harris and worked on his plantation. Afterwards he started a farm of his own, and now owns 2,000 acres of vineyards and makes more than \$1,000,000 worth of wine every year. Ushijima of San Francisco is called a "potato king." Before success crowned his business—success due to Spanish-American War he had failed and failed until he was reduced to such a condition that he was forced to live on flour and salt. Another Japanese millionaire of California almost monopolizes the supply of flowers for San Francisco.

Wherever there is sufficient number of Japanese there are Japanese restaurants, hotels, laundries, and stores. The customers are Japanese farmers working on their own farms or on leased land, or those employed by American farmers. According to the report of the Labor Commissioner of California, the Japanese furnish 87 per cent of the strawberry, 67 per cent of the beet, 50 per cent of the grape, and more than 50 per cent of such other agricultural products as require some productive skill, that are raised in California. This shows to what extent the Japanese have become necessary in the carrying on of agriculture in California.

The Japanese scattered in other parts of the United States are not pursuing so uniform a trade as those in California. In Washington there are about 10,000 Japanese, principally working as domestic servants, in sawmills and railroad building, or on farms. In the Eastern States, a great number of Japanese are doing housework. Some of them, however, are earning their living as acrobats, or as owners of rolling ball establishments in summer resorts and fairs.

By far the most important branch of the Japanese community in the United States is that engaged in the Japanese-American trade. Last year the trade between Japan and America amounted to \$100,000,000, the exports from America to Japan being \$28,000,000 and exports from Japan to America \$72,000,000. The main currents of the trade are in the buying of cotton and machinery from America by Japan, and in the buying of silk, tea, and porcelain by America from Japan. The greater portion of these lines

of business is carried on by the Japanese. The Japanese buyers of cotton are backed by Japanese capital and have their offices in New York and in the cotton-producing centers. The buyers of machinery are also on the spot. Mitsui, Okura, Takata, and Iida, are names that represent huge wealth in Japan. Their companies have offices in New York and are supplying American machinery to Japanese railways, mines, and factories. In the sale of Japanese goods to America, again, New York has become a principal center of distribution. Mitsui and Morimura are doing a large business.

Morimura and Company, New York, is the largest store in the world dealing in Japanese porcelain, and is largely responsible for the building up of the Japanese porcelain trade in the United States. The firm has modelled its factories at home so as to make its porcelain suit the American tastes.

The Japanese in the various American cities have their clubs, but the most important of these is the Nippon Club, of New York, with its dainty Japanese drawing room, and a membership of 130. It has a few American members, General Stewart L. Woodford being one. There is also the Japan Society of New York, established with a view to promoting friendly relations between Japan and America. This society is also seeking to make Americans understand the Japanese through the medium of exhibitions, lectures and dinners. Its membership includes the most prominent figures both American and Japanese, in the financial and social circles of New York.

As I have said before, the immigration of laborers from Japan to the United States has ceased since the present arrangement between the two nations was agreed to, but the relations of the two countries are becoming closer and closer because of the increasing interest shown by America in the Far East, and by the Japanese in American affairs. The day, I hope, is not far distant when the peoples of these two lands on the Pacific's shores will understand and appreciate one another thoroughly and well, to the everlasting good not only to themselves but of all the children of men.